CHANG

THE ROYALIST AND REBEL

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CHANG

THE ROYALIST AND REBEL

BY

M. LITTLETON SMITHEY COLLYER

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PREFACE

THIS little volume contains a true story from China. Chang is a real character, who has for years aided the translating committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society in rendering the scriptures into Chinese.

I have put his story in verse, and have amplified it so far as to make him give a brief exposition of Confucianism, and a few more facts in regard to Gen. Gordon and the Tae-ping Rebellion, than his original narrative contained. These I have taken from trustworthy authorities. In all other essential points Chang's story is as he related it eight years ago to my husband, Rev. C. T. Collyer, who was at that time engaged in work of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Shanghai.

My imagination created the evening of despondency with which the story opens, as descriptive of those times which often oppress a missionary in a heathen land, and I have made the coming of Chang at that particular time as the source of encouragement needed.

The incidents in Bible Society work, the imprisonment and expulsion from a large city, the hearts of whose people were afterwards strangely stirred by five copies of the Gospel left among them, were true experiences of my husband.

M. LITTLETON SMITHEY COLLYER.

May 26, 1902.

DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY OF HER,

WHO FIRST TAUGHT MY STEPS THE WAY TO GOD,

MY MOTHER

CHANG

I

'TWAS evening in Shanghai, and I sat alone,
Weary of heart by the office hearth-stone
Of the British and Foreign Bible House, where
I posted the books, and daily strove there
To accomplish the work which came to my hand,
And glorify the Lord in that far away land.
Within there was light, but darkness outside
Deeper than that which at evening-tide
On the world comes down, or at midnight's hour:
For that darkness came of heathen power,
And hung like a pall o'er China's great land,
Which no light could pierce, nor lift any hand,
Save that which broke, when Bethlehem's star
Arose to lighten the world afar,
And the hand reaching downward, pierced for sin,
Ever knocking at her heart but never let in,
Though a few of her people believed His word,
And those who preached it, sent of the Lord.
An idol procession below filled the street,
And upward came sounds of the tramping of feet.

II

My heart on that eve was sinking within,
Pressed down by the misery, suffering and sin

Of a nation that its God had forgot,
And set up its own gods, but Gods they were not,
And how fruitless seemed best effort of mine
To lift men higher — up to the Divine.
Added to that I held in my hand
A letter from a friend in my own native land,
Who needed, himself, but only to fall
At the feet of the Master, yielding Him all
The talents of mind and talents of gold,
Entrusted for use so many fold,
With character strong and heart so true
That, if once given, well I knew
Would stand the test, though tried by fire,
And purified come, with but desire
To glorify his Lord and serve anywhere,
When self sank down and God rose there.
Sometimes through his letters a bright thread ran,
And I would deem that time near at hand;
But he now asked proofs of success in the work,
And beneath that question another did lurk.
And added he "After all, does it pay
For time and money expended that way,
To say nothing of lives sacrificed there,
When at home there is plenty to do everywhere?"

III

An answer to this, I could not delay,
But felt it must speedily go on its way

Even with the morn, to witness 'twas worth
All expended to send forth the truth,
That perishing souls might look unto him,
Their Saviour who had suffered for them ;
To whom they were precious, tho' steeped in sin,
So precious, He died their lost souls to win.

IV

Is a soul worth saving ? Ask of thy soul
And let its answer thy life control.
As it did His, who on the cross died
And, answered forever, in the blood of His side,
The worth of a soul, through sin tho' it fell,
The life of the Lord — to save it from Hell.

V

But my heart was heavy and I longed that night
For some new message to tell of the light
The Gospel was bringing — wearily then,
Time after time, grasped I my pen
Statistics to write over again,
And things seen and heard that might not be vain,
But failed ; then, turning away with a sigh,
I felt I needed somewhat from on high
For my own troubled soul — some Heaven-born
light,
Ere I could influence another aright,

I felt I needed more faith in God's word,
Which He declared should not return void.

VI

With that thought I arose, and stood in the room,
Stored with that printed word in many a tongue,
Whose embossed titles in the firelight glowed,
From shelves surrounding me where they were stowed ;
And thought of the volumes the whole house through,
And those daily sent forth which fell like the dew
All over the land, that through it might steal
The knowledge of God and His great love reveal.

VII

As I gazed, I thought of those first early days,
When my heart leaped up, filled with His praise,
And forth I had gone, trusting in naught
But God's promise, His word should void return not;
And how it sustained me both night and day,
When far away inland I went on my way,
That word to distribute — to the people to sell —
And strove in broken language the story to tell
Of a God over all, of a Saviour who came
And died for their sins, and prepared them a home,

Beyond their Emperor's grandeur, or the stars
that shone
In the firmament above, or the glory of the sun,
And the love that brought Him down, eternal life
to give,
And take them to Himself forever more to live.

VIII

Sometimes I was roughly treated, and imprisoned
too,
Again kindly received by humblest of the low,
Who nobler guest had had to come and sup with
them,
For they'd heard the Saviour's voice and had let
Him in.
Sometimes with buoyant spirit I traveled on for
days,
Again my spirit sank, as hedged were all the ways,
Crosses too were given, though heavy I must bear,
To bring me nearer God, and to uplift me there.
Illness then my portion, and it laid me low,
But, through it all, my Saviour I better learned
to know.
Oft for many months I no foreign face could see,
But multitudes of natives e'er surrounded me,
Whose hardened, heathen faces, like adamant un-
moved,
As their stone gods no power of heart, the set ex-
pression showed,

Which well nigh beat back my courage with the hardened look,
As did hatred and vile curses in every way I took,
Yet they once bore the image of the most Holy One —
Created like Himself—and redeemed with His Son;
And yet again can bear it through redeeming grace —
I have seen its glory gleam on the Christian's softened face.

IX

Again one' sent of God would pass along the way,
With sympathy that brightened many a weary day,
Once when sore discouraged, I found a frailer[2] one,
Bearing heavier burden than e'er to me had come,
Whose eyes of faith looked upward through the darkest night,
And patient face wore traces of a heavenly light;
And I went forth afresh to fight the battle o'er,
And win it for my Master, where I had failed before.

X

I ever felt the burden of the watchman on the wall,

[1] A foreign worker. [2] Interior lady missionary.

If I warned not the people, their blood on me would fall,
If but the blood of one was required at my hand,
How could I, at the last, before my Master stand?

XI

Oft I saw a father forward lead his son
To a temple, where instructions were begun
In heathen worship, and before his idols fall,
While I with rent heart upon my God would call
To mercy have, and grant some beam of heavenly light
From the Son of Righteousness to dawn upon his night.
Ere this prayer would leave me, I would hear a cry —
From beggars on the street as I was passing by —
"Do good deeds great teacher!" and it coined all
The misery to me to mankind could befall:
For good deeds, done for merit, men so often sell
Their immortal soul to death's eternal hell,
With good deeds, to Heaven the way was never won,
But only through the merit of God's Holy Son.

XII

Once faith almost wavered, for there came a day,
When from a great walled city I was turned away,

Where I had gone, there hoping to sell all my store
Of Gospels ere I left, and even many more ;
With my native helper, I was imprisoned there
that night,
And by a band of soldiers sent with the early light
Outside the official precincts ; as I rode by their
side,
I could not understand what then did me betide,
Why had I sold but five books ? I questioned o'er
and o'er,
When with such faith and labor I'd taken thous-
ands more.
As we passed out the city, the ponderous iron gate,
Swinging back on rusty hinges, seemed into my
soul to grate,
And tears sprang to my eyes, for disappointment
sore
And failure crowned my life as it never had before.

XIII

Yet once more I struggled forward, and onward
went my way
Far into the interior, and long after met one day
Another in God's work, who joyfully told to me,
How in a distant city God had wrought great
victory —
He said two missionaries reached a city where he'd
heard,

The people crowded round and asked them for
God's word,
"Of God," enquired they, "How is it that you
know?"
The people made reply—"'Twas a long while ago,
One day at even-tide, when 'twas growing late,
A foreigner came here through this same city
gate—
The people pressed upon him, his like they'd never
seen,
For a foreigner in our city before had never been—
He spoke of a new life that one to us could give,
Who loved and for us died that henceforth we
might live.
He declared the books he then held in his hand
Would tell us of that life and of a glorious land.
Five books alone he'd sold when the Governor for
him sent,
And made him leave the city, and thus away he
went.
But the books we read—and we would know
more
Of this new life of which we've heard but once be-
fore."
Again the tears welled to my eyes, for by my
little all
God's great power I'd measured, because my faith
was small,

Then songs of praises from my heart ascended
full and free
For God's great faithfulness — faithfulness to me.

XIV

As those experiences, following fast,
Came to strengthen me, back from the past,
Faith came with power my faint soul to light,
And again I turned me round to write.
I eagerly grasped my pen, but had done scarcely
more,
When there came a ring at the Society's street
door.

XV

I quickly left my desk, and went down the stair,
And opened wide the door, to find standing there
Chang, a man whom I had met many times before,
A native of some five and sixty years or more,
Whose intellectual eye and strong face combined
Showed strength of character and brilliancy of
mind.
In his native country, a high place he had won,
Then yet a higher—in the kingdom of God's Son—
Of a humble Christian man, working for his bread,
And among his people striving the Gospel's light
to spread,

In a Christian mission, he held of trust a place
And was a man of thought and of Christian grace.

XVI

I had often, in the past, had short converse with him,
When together thrown in our work we'd been,
And he never left me, but I longed to know the more
Of a life so different from that life before.

XVII

I gladly welcomed him, and showed him up the stair,
And soon we both were seated in my office, where
We conversed a while, and then he said to me,
"When I left home to-night, I thought not you to see,
I had been to service at the Mission Church to-night
And turned the *Nee Mo Luh*[1] to see your window's light,
And something brought me here — what I do not know —
Unless it is to talk of what oft we have before —
Of how God's word is spreading and bringing in the light
To my darkened people, as I have heard to-night

[1] A street in Shanghai.

But some they cursed the preacher, it grieved my heart to see,
And yet''— he bowed his head —"once 'twas the same with me.''
On his face a sadness deepened as he spoke,
And there fell a silence, which presently I broke,
By asking him his life a little to unfold,
As I much desired to know more than I'd been told.
As he raised his head I could his features scan,
Deep thought o'erspread his face, as his story thus began :

XVIII

" In Nankin my childhood and early youth were spent,
My father's home was there, and to school I was duly sent,
To become a scholar, and have a degree,
Thus following my father, for such an one was he.
There I studied on, till twenty years of age,
Following Confucius, China's greatest sage,
Adherent of his system, based on philosophy
Of political and social life, which constantly taught he
His disciples, that fully I might attain
Wisdom and knowledge which one alone could gain,

By performance strict, and faithfully given,
Of appointed duties and the cultivation
Of proper feelings all, and sentiments most true,
Which, however hard, I ever strove to do.

XIX

"My country's ancient laws I venerated all,
And the dead I worshiped in ancestral hall,
Also spirits, rivers, mountains and Shangti,
Whose outward emblem is the firmament we see,
But which is only verbal personification,
And nothing more, that has been given
To the ever present law and the order found
And intelligence, which ever doth abound,
In activities of physical creation,
In season's circuit, day and night's alternation,
Which doth seem to breathe in the tides ebb and
flow
And to move along as the heavenly bodies go.

XX

"When Confucius did to this power ascribe
Intelligence and the exercise
Of moral government, he did but only speak
Of nature's laws, nor further seemed to seek—
If at times he held a thought, in his inmost soul,
Of mysterious life, pervading the whole,

Expression did not give of what might be,
A spark of life there struggling for immortality—
But sometimes reprimanded those whom he taught
For seeking into things beyond their depth of thought,
All spiritual tendency thus crushing
In human nature by repudiating,
Of unknown things, all speculation
And well nigh all investigation,
On metaphysics, he would not think,
And from theology equally did shrink.
In all his teaching, there is no trace of God,
Or that all things came forth by his word,
Thus following his teaching, like him I became
An atheist as all who doth name his name."

XXI

Chang paused, and as he did so, I thought how true,
Of Confucian doctrine, was his expressed view;
For individuality in man it crushes all
And that which, on conviction, though he needs must fall,
Makes him single-handed face a foe and fight—
To live or die for that which he believes is right—
As the martyrs did, whose blood upon the ground
Proved they believed they'd find what in death they found.

XXII

"'Twas more than forty years ago," then continued he,
"In Emperor Hien-Fung's reign before that of Tung-Chi,
Discontent was then great in the land;
The people were oppressed by official hand,
Till starvation came creeping to the door,
Still the extortioner yet extortioned more,
Till ready were the people to accept, it seemed,
Anything in view and however wild a scheme,
That deliverance promised from their sad condition
And would give the right of claiming restitution,
When there arose a man who'd disappointed been
Of government employ — Hung-Sew-Tsuen.
Incensed was he by failure—was Heaven-sent he claimed,
An inspired one, and his mission he proclaimed
Was the hated Manchu from the throne to cast,
And place a Ming thereon whose dynasty should last.
Prophet too, claimed he, of vengeance and freedom
Champion of power, and seer of vision.

XXIII

"Some thought him demented, but so masterly
The means to converts gain e'er employed he,
That the people believed and it was not long
Ere his army grew to many thousand strong.
Then he proclaimed himself the Heavenly-sent king,
The emperor of great peace—Tae-Ping.

XXIV

"Five warrior kinsmen he then by his hand
Created kings, and the army through the land
Marched, spreading ruin and fire, distress and famine sore,
And every day the number yet numbered more.
Secret societies ancient, warriors desperate,
Yet swelled the number, with bandit and pirate.

XXV

"When first I heard the news, I did not think it true,
The rebels were so strong and such harm could do;
But, as the time went by, all was true I found,
And the people fell with faces to the ground,
When they saw advancing that barbaric host
With tawdry dress and banners, and they did almost

Perish, ere the rebels fell upon them with knife
and cutlass,
Their homes and lives to take, and the land devast.

XXVI

"Still I studied on, deeming that the foe
By Imperial hand would soon be lying low,
Till three years had passed since in the land,
First we had heard rumors of the rebel band,
When one day to the city some one news did bring,
That the fearful army was marching on Nankin.

XXVII

"Terror-stricken people many fled to find
Refuge in other places, leaving all behind;
Others there remained, and did the hope express
That the Imperialists yet would them repress.
But that hope was vain, for there came a day,
When from the city rose a great cry of dismay,
Which told they were upon us—I, too, quaked
with fear,
When from the wall I saw them fast advancing
near,
Their aspect more dreadful than ever I had
dreamed—
Ere long the city fell and within they streamed.

XXVIII

"Wildly the people ran to and fro that day ;
Grasping my father's hand, with him I fled away,
Striving with many others the opposite gate to reach
In the city's wall from where they made the breach,
Sometimes we stumbled sorely and oft were overrun,
Before the arches of that distant gate were won ;
Then came a backward swaying—a falling to the ground,
As the gate was held by the enemy we found.
To right and left we ran, as best we could we fled,
Fearing to look backward, as swiftly on we sped.

XXIX

"I sought a place of refuge by the wall to gain,
And, when the point was won, deemed it not in vain ;
But great was my dismay, on looking round to find,
A young man there with me, my father left behind.
I started up at once to go and search for him,
But saw the way cut off in the distance dim,

By rebels pouring through the gate and I knew
that he
Had been taken by their hand, as those behind
would be.

XXX

"The young man and myself crouched close be-
side the wall,
Till the evening shadows darkening began to fall;
Climbing over then, we safely reached the ground
And started for the river, where a boat we found,
Which was there for hire, and gained the other
side,
Ere the morning broke, tho' the river there is
wide.
Northward then we wandered, living as we could,
In no place tarrying long, for fear the rebels would
Come upon and take us, as they did at last
In a hamlet, where we the night had passed.

XXXI

"Manual work was given me, which I could not
do;
When that was reported and found to be true,
And that I had never done such work before,
But was a scholar, versed in Confucius lore,

The rolls to keep were given me, and thus did I
Unwillingly the rebels serve till several years passed by,
Yet, all that time a chance to make escape I sought,
But such an hoped for one was presented not,
Till one night the armies in darkness lay opposed,
And the great rebel camp in slumber deep reposed;
Then I to Imperial forces did stealthily repair,
And signalled surrender to the guard standing there.
Keeping the Imperial rolls I served for three years more,
As I had done the rebels for three years before.
Then a change was made, and it was not long
Before I was Secretary to great Li Hung Chang.

XXXII

"All this time the war had raged solely between
The Imperial government and Hung Sew Tsuen.
Strength was ever added to the rebel band,
And misery and want grew greater in the land;
Then foreign aid was sought, and in Sung Kiang to-day
Lies Ward, the American, who that city took away

From the enemy, and rendered service true
To my suffering country as he essayed to do.
Then after one unworthy,[1] General Gordon came,
A skilled Englishman, whose one and only aim
In life was his duty faithfully to do,
No victory regarded he to effort of his due ;
But, whate'er his triumphs, held them not his own,
But of a higher cause, for which he'd fought and won,
The name of Gordon, ah! 'tis high on honour's roll,
And where e'er recorded bears the whiteness of his soul.

XXXIII

" Though difficulties many awaited then his hand,
The army grew victorious under his command.
That army a great leader no longer needed then,
And city after city were recaptured by his men.
When Soochow was taken, where the warrior kings
Surrendered we hoped for greater things ;
But ere they came, while we rejoiced o'er present victory,
There fell a dark spot on our country's history.
General Gordon had promised, endorsed by Li,[2]

[1] Burgevine. [2] Li Hung Chang.

That if Soochow surrendered, honourable should be
The treatment of the warrior kings of the rebel band,
Who gave up the city to Imperial hand.
Soochow surrendered, and Gordon marched away[1]
To take the city of Quin-San, and, on return next day,
Was met by General Ching, who told him it was said
That mercy unto all had been accorded.
He was pleased and satisfied ; but it was not long
Ere he heard massacred they had been by Li Hung Chang.
He bowed his head and wept when he found 'twas true,
Perhaps the most trying moment his life ever knew.
"For three days did he seek for Li Hung Chang;
'Tis said that had he found him, avenged had been the wrong.
The deed was laid to Gordon, but 'twas not of his hand;
And there arose a cry all throughout the land,
That not even when the men of Han fought Mongal and Manchu,
Or half barbaric troops, in the glorious days of Chu,

[1] Gen. Gordon, before leaving Soochow, was assured of the safety of the warrior kings, and bade them good by, as they went to give over the city formally to Li Hung Chang.

Did ever China blush with deed or with blood so
spilled,
Or atrocity so great as of the army English-drilled.

XXXIV

"The honours the country gave, Gordon threw
upon her soil,
Such could not appease his honour's wild turmoil.
He stood erect receiving only honour of his God,
At whose call his feet had first pressed our heathen
sod.
To continue the campaign was to endorse that
done —
To leave the country to its fate, to lose what had
been won.
He knew that innocent lives yet to be defended
Of millions of people still on him depended
And, though the deed placed him in difficulty
great,
For their sakes again he served when exonerate[1]

XXXV

"None can tell how fearful things had grown to be
In the land but they those fearful things did see.
Hung Sew Tsuen was guilty of cruelties greater
than
Has ever been accorded to any other man ;

[1] Gen. Gordon required the Chinese Government to issue a proclamation exonerating him.

Flaying alive, pounding to death were practiced by him
As usual puniishment of unfortunate victim.

XXXVI

How the people suffered all o'er the land,
It is impossible for one to understand ;
From place to place there wandered gaunt, starving creatures, they
Would from decaying corpses eat human flesh away ;
Helpless bound-feet women, little children by their side,
Were by the cruel rebels slaughtered far and wide.

XXXVII

" A few more months of conflict, and only Nankin then
Was by the rebels held, where reigned Hung-Sew-Tsuen
When that city fell, he was advised to flee,
But despised the suggestion that one so great as he —
Lord of ten thousand nations and who then held fast
The Empire, hills and streams, in an iron grasp —

Should fear or flee ; but, when he saw the coming
end,
He hung his thirty wives, and took his own life
then.

XXXVIII

" Thus after fifteen years the great rebellion o'er,
I homeward to Nankin turned my steps once more,
To learn my father's fate, of which I nothing heard,
Though inquiring often, of him I'd had no word,
" When I neared the city, I saw that everywhere
Destruction was written, and all things waste and
bare —
The stone animals and warriors guarding the
Mings,
As they lay entombed, alone were unmolested
things —
Level with the ground, the porcelain tower great,
And all within the city was made desolate,

XXXIX

" After weary searching, my childhood's home I
found ;
'Twas but a pile of debris rising from the ground.
No tidings of my father gained I anywhere,
Though day and night I sought him among the
people there,

Till days grew into months, and months to years
gave place,
Yet, for all my seeking, of him I found no trace.
I knew not with the living or the dead, were he,
But ever longed the more his face once more to
see,
Wondering what suffering he'd had to undergo,
How I'd have saved him from it, this to you will
show;"
He put aside his sleeve, and his left arm made
bare,
And showed a large, deep scar above the elbow,
where
His own flesh had been taken, that it might avail
To save his father's life, when all remedies once
failed.[1]

XL

Continuing his story, said he, "One day there
came
Rumor that a man of my father's age and name
In the city of Hongchow by some one had been
seen.
I hastened there to find that in the place there'd
been

[1]It is a belief in China that, when all remedies fail, a parent will be restored to health by eating the flesh of his child.

One like unto my father, but learned I nothing
more,
Though for two years I searched city and country
o'er.
I was then informed to Soochow he had gone ;
As soon as I heard that, thither I hastened on
To find awaiting me, as there had been before,
After weary searching, disappointment sore.
With but faint hope within me, it was then that I,
Hearing another rumor, turned footsteps to
Shanghai ;
There I lived and sought him till hope had fled
from me,
And despair had told me his face no more I'd see.

XLI

"One day while passing a familiar street along,
I heard the singing of a Christian song.
I quickly looked to see from whence had come
the sound,
And saw an open door, with people gathering round;
I pushed my way along until I stood within
A small street chapel where people were wor-
shiping.
A foreigner[1] stood preaching Christ, such I'd not
heard before,
Foreigners I hated—their God I hated more.

[1]The late Dr. Muirhead, of the London Missionary Society.

I set me to blaspheme, and to my countrymen
Derided Christ and Christian, and showed contempt for them,
By drawing my silken robe aside lest polluted it should be,
By contact with the chapel pews of Christianity.
While I thus derided and enjoined the people there,
In a corner I beheld someone bowed in prayer ;
I forward moved to him to draw him from his place,
But when he raised his head, I looked on my father's face.

XLII

" One moment all was silent, then that meeting after years
Came with a rush of feeling and a flow of tears ;
The Christian service had to end, so noisy had become,
By what had happened, the little chapel's room.

XLIII

" The emotion and excitement were but scarcely o'er
Of meeting my father, and ere we left the door,

I even chided him for the Jesus doctrine new ;
But he replied, if you knew Jesus you would love
Him too.

XLIV

"That was all the answer made, but as I walked
by his side
To his humble dwelling, where I would abide,
He told me how his life was spared, and of his
wanderings sore,
And great sorrow, for me he feared he'd see no
more.
"But the Heavenly Father brought you ; He has
blessed me night and day,
And Jesus Christ, His Son, has taken my sins
away."
Ere he slept that night, from a book read he
Of Christ's great love for sinners, and then he
prayed for me.

XLV

"The hated doctrine I pondered, as I noted day
by day
The light upon my father's face that naught
could take away.
And human life made perfect by power I did not
know,

L. of C.

With no reference to Confucius, or aught that he
did show.
With conscious sins all pardoned, and heart where
perfect peace
Reigned with a hope eternal of joys that could
not cease.
As I thought of that power and life so strange
and new,
I, too, read the scriptures to find if it were true;
What wonder that the Spirit breathing through
the whole,
Changed me from a heathen to a Christian soul!

XLVI

"Since then I've followed Jesus, and the Christian
way have trod,
And am bringing up my children in love and fear
of God;
His grace it is sufficient. Once, when on a bed
of pain,
His presence filled my room and joy returned
again.
None could e'er dissuade me that vision I did not
see,
For it brought comfort then, and still abides with
me.
But list'! the custom's clock I hear! Eleven is
the hour,

And I must go. God bless and keep you by His
power !''
With that he said good-night ; I showed him
down the stair,
And saw him cross the street, while I was stand-
ing there,
And pass into the darkness, which held no
night for him,
For the Pagan soul was lighted by the Christ
within.

XLVII

I back into the office turned with a heart made
light
By the wondrous story I had heard that night,
And unto many since that story I have told,
And its inspiration still within my heart I hold.

Richmond
Clyde W. Saunders
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